

A white semi-truck is driving on a snowy road in winter. The road is covered in snow, and there are snow-covered trees and bushes in the background. The truck is moving towards the right side of the frame. The overall scene is in a cool, blue-toned color palette.

Winter Driving Safety for Truckers

Provided by: SCS Agency Inc

Learning Objectives

- ◉ Winter driving poses a wide range of safety risks. Various seasonal conditions can create hazards on the road, such as slippery surfaces and visibility concerns. Common winter conditions include:
 - ❑ Snow
 - ❑ Ice and slush
 - ❑ Frigid temperatures
- ◉ According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 17% of all vehicle crashes occur amid winter conditions.

Learning Objectives (Continued)

- It's important to know how to properly protect yourself and others behind the wheel when winter weather strikes. During this presentation, you will learn how to:
 - ❑ Uphold general winter driving best practices
 - ❑ Conduct seasonal vehicle maintenance
 - ❑ Utilize winter-related vehicle accessories
 - ❑ Create winter driving emergency kits
 - ❑ Monitor the roadways for seasonal hazards
 - ❑ Respond to different winter driving scenarios

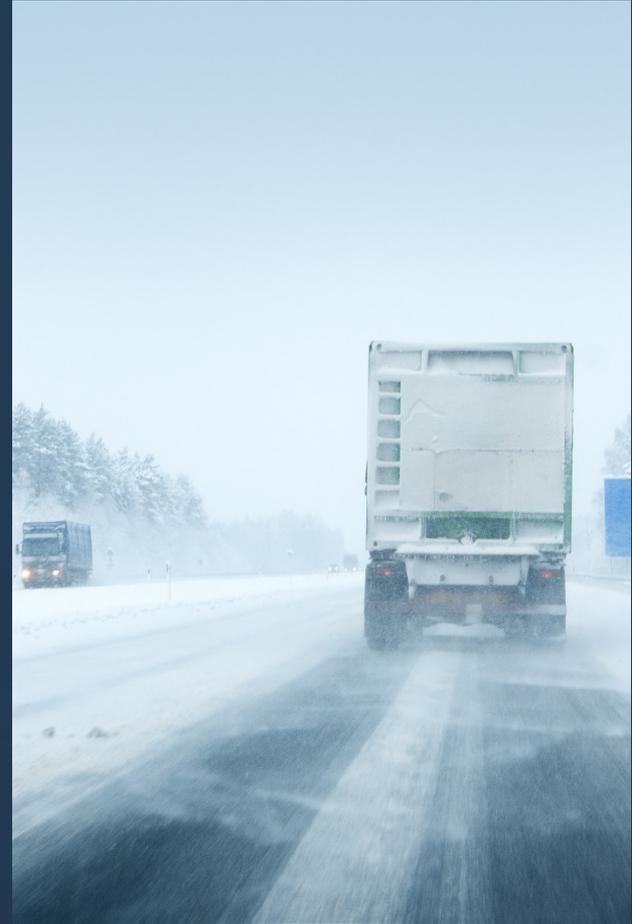
General Winter Driving Best Practices

- **Reduce your speed.** Snowy and icy roads can limit your vehicle's traction. Slow down to stay in control of your vehicle and allow yourself plenty of time to react if hazards arise.
- **Maintain a safe following distance.** During winter conditions, it's best to increase your following distance by eight to 10 seconds. Doing so can minimize the risk of collisions and provide you with ample room to move out of harm's way amid emergencies.



General Winter Driving Best Practices (Continued)

- **Brake and accelerate with caution.** Refrain from making sudden stops or starts in winter weather; quick movements could cause your vehicle to skid. Always brake and accelerate slowly.
- **Remain alert.** Stay focused on the road ahead. Be especially careful on ramps, bridges and overpasses, as they could become extremely slippery from snow and ice. Don't use cruise control in winter weather; it could impede your reaction time.



General Winter Driving Best Practices (Continued)

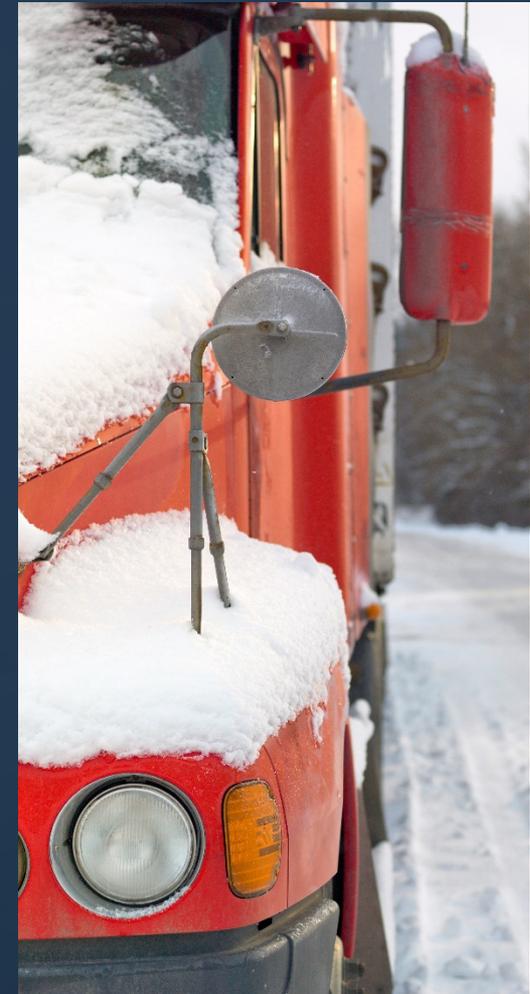
- ◉ **Share the road.** Give snowplows plenty of room. Avoid driving near the center lines of the roadways, as this could increase the likelihood of colliding with snowplows. Don't pass snowplows. If you approach them from behind, slow down and let them finish their routes.
- ◉ **Aim for traction.** Keep in mind that vehicles carrying heavy loads will provide more traction, while those with empty trailers may offer less traction. If necessary, turn on your vehicle's inter-axle differential switch to secure further traction. Remember to turn the switch off after use, and never drive over 30 mph with it on.

General Winter Driving Best Practices (Continued)

- ⦿ **Don't leave the vehicle.** If you get stuck in a blizzard behind the wheel, find an area to safely pull over and wait out the storm. Don't leave your vehicle unless it's an emergency.
- ⦿ **Consult experienced drivers.** Especially if you are a new driver, be sure to talk to your more experienced co-workers and supervisors for additional winter driving safety tips.

Seasonal Vehicle Maintenance

- Prepare your vehicle for winter conditions by inspecting the following components before each trip:
 - ❑ **Battery**—Cold weather can lower battery power, so it's important to ensure your vehicle's battery is in good shape.
 - ❑ **Fifth-wheel lubrication**—Make sure you are using a winter-grade product, as a summer-grade lubricant can cause steering issues when temperatures drop.
 - ❑ **Radiator**—Confirm there is proper winter coolant in your vehicle's radiator and there are no leaks.



Seasonal Vehicle Maintenance (Continued)

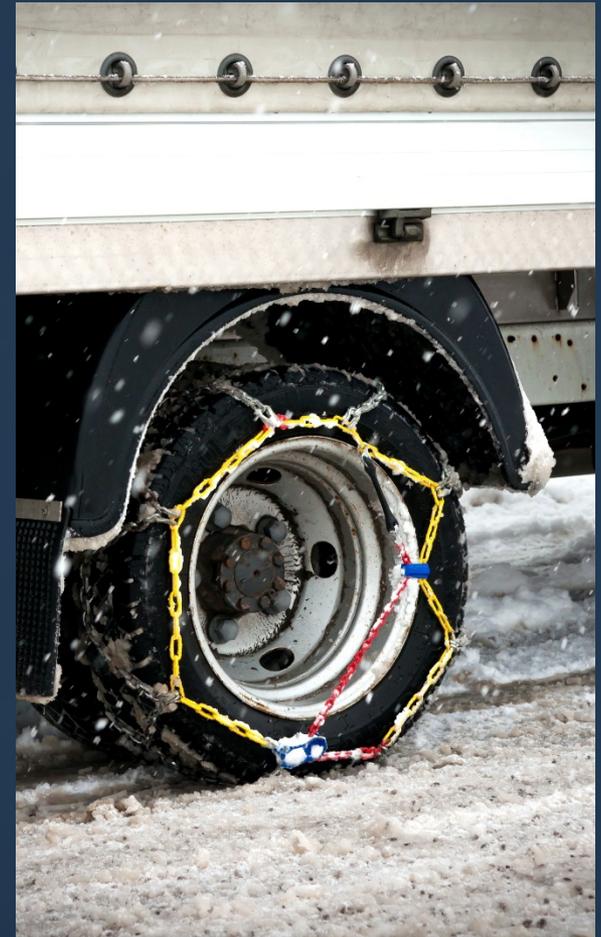
- ❑ **Lights, heater, defroster and wiper blades**—Be sure these components are in good condition, especially if you haven't used them since last winter. If these elements aren't working properly, your visibility and overall safety could be compromised when driving.
 - ❑ **Tires**—Assess your tires for appropriate tread depth. Insufficient tread depth could affect your vehicle's traction, braking capabilities and stopping distance amid icy or snowy conditions.
 - ❑ **Fuel tank**—Try to keep your vehicle's fuel tank at least half full at all times during winter. Also, consider implementing additives within your vehicle's fuel to prevent it from gelling in the presence of cold temperatures. Consult company driving policies for more information on fuel additives.
- In addition to inspecting these components, remember to clear your vehicle's exterior of any ice or snow buildup before hitting the road.

Winter-related Vehicle Accessories

- ◉ Some vehicle accessories may offer additional protection in wintry conditions, including snow chains.
- ◉ These chains can be utilized to cover vehicles' tires in order to provide greater traction on snowy and icy roads.
- ◉ Snow chains are required in some states and prohibited in others. Consult state regulations to determine the legality of these chains in your area.

Winter-related Vehicle Accessories (Continued)

- Review company driving policies for more information on applicable snow chain requirements.
- If snow chains are required or permitted in your area, ensure you know how to properly mount them before winter weather strikes.



Winter Driving Emergency Kits

- Be sure your vehicle is stocked with an emergency kit before driving in winter weather. This kit should include:
 - ❑ A flashlight and batteries
 - ❑ Blankets and extra clothing (e.g., a long-sleeve shirt, coat, hat, gloves, thick socks and snow boots)
 - ❑ Water and nonperishable food items
 - ❑ A first-aid kit and essential medications
 - ❑ A bag of sand or salt and extra washer fluid
 - ❑ A snow brush, scraper and shovel
 - ❑ Jumper cables and a toolbox
 - ❑ Warning devices (e.g., flares and reflectors)
 - ❑ Tire chains or traction mats
 - ❑ A cellphone and charger
 - ❑ A lighter and matches

Monitoring the Roadways for Seasonal Hazards

- ◉ **Pay attention to the weather.** Always check weather reports before driving. Doing so will allow you to properly prepare for certain road conditions and related hazards. Utilize weather channels and state traffic maps (if available) for real-time updates behind the wheel.
- ◉ **Use your thermometer.** Equip your vehicle with a thermometer that shows you the temperatures inside the vehicle and outdoors. Be particularly cautious when the outside temperature falls below freezing (32 degrees Fahrenheit).
- ◉ **Know the signs.** Continuously assess the road ahead for indicators of unsafe conditions and respond accordingly. For example, if vehicles in front of you appear to be sliding, have rapidly bouncing antennas (if applicable) or contain exterior ice or snow buildup, the roadways are likely slippery.

Responding to Different Winter Driving Scenarios

- Make sure you know how to safely respond to the following situations while driving in winter:
 - **Frozen brakes**—If your vehicle's trailer brakes become frozen, try slowly backing up to loosen the ice or supplying the brakes with air and lightly hitting the drum (not the pads) with a hammer.
 - **Skidding**—If your vehicle begins to skid, use the steering wheel to stay in front of the trailer and continue steering or counter-steering until you regain full control of the wheel. Avoid using the brakes or accelerator unless absolutely necessary.

Responding to Different Winter Driving Scenarios (Continued)



- ❑ **Jackknifing**—If skidding isn't corrected in time, jackknifing may occur. This term refers to an articulated vehicle's trailer pushing the tractor around until the truck cab collides with the trailer. When jackknifing occurs, try to act as quickly as possible by looking into the left side-view mirror and steering to realign the tractor with the trailer. Never use the brakes in such a scenario.

Summary

- Overall, it's clear that winter driving poses unique hazards. That's why it's crucial for you to understand how to stay safe behind the wheel amid winter conditions.
- By following proper precautions, conducting routine vehicle maintenance, maintaining a fully stocked emergency kit, monitoring road conditions and knowing how to react to different scenarios, you can safely navigate winter driving.
- Regardless of the season, remember to always put safety first on the road. After all, no journey is worth your life (or others' lives).

For More Information

For further information regarding winter driving or other safety topics, please contact:

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